

treatment is, not to push the emetic, but to endeavour to restore the sensibility of the patient, and then sometimes vomiting comes on at once.

"5. In using tartar emetic in children, especial regard should be had to their constitutions. In those naturally delicate, and especially where the scrofulous diathesis exists, it should never be used if it can be avoided. Prostration is much more apt to ensue in them, and where the article is persisted in for any length of time, is sure to do harm. It is in such constitutions, when labouring under whooping-cough, and where the use of this article has been too long continued, that the baneful effects of it are most strikingly observed.

"6. It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that if tartar emetic be an article of such danger, the younger the subject to whom it is given, the more likely it is to do harm. In children under a year, I should say, as a general rule, it ought never to be used. During that period, the powers of life are too feeble to bear so active a remedy, at the same time that all the beneficial effects of an emetic may be gained from the use of ipecacuanha, or even milder means."

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*Inhalation of Ethereal Vapour for the Prevention of Pain in Surgical Operations.* By JOHN C. WARREN, M. D.—Application has been made to me by R. H. Eddy, Esq., in a letter dated Nov. 30th, in behalf of Dr. W. T. G. Morton, to furnish an account of the operations witnessed and performed by me, wherein his new discovery for preventing pain was employed. Dr. M. has also proposed to me to give him the names of such hospitals as I know of in this country, in order that he may present them with the use of his discovery. These applications, and the hope of being useful to my professional brethren, especially those concerned in the hospitals which may have the benefit of Dr. M.'s proposal, have induced me to draw up the following statement, and to request that it may be made public through your Journal.

The discovery of a mode of preventing pain in surgical operations has been an object of strong desire among surgeons from an early period. In my surgical lectures I have almost annually alluded to it, and stated the means which I have usually adopted for the attainment of this object. I have also freely declared, that notwithstanding the use of very large doses of narcotic substances, this desideratum had never been satisfactorily obtained. The successful use of any article of the *materia medica* for this purpose, would therefore be hailed by me as an important alleviation to human suffering. I have in consequence readily admitted the trial of plans calculated to accomplish this object, whenever they were free from danger.

About five weeks since, Dr. Morton, dentist of this city, informed me that he had invented an apparatus for the inhalation of a vapour, the effect of which was to produce a state of total insensibility to pain, and that he had employed it successfully in a sufficient number of cases in his practice to justify him in a belief of its efficacy. He wished for an opportunity to test its power in surgical operations, and I agreed to give him such an opportunity as soon as practicable.

Being at that time in attendance as Surgeon of the Massachusetts General Hospital, a patient presented himself in that valuable institution a few days after my conversation with Dr. Morton, who required an operation for a tumour of the neck, and agreeably to my promise I requested the attendance of Dr. M.

On October 17th, the patient being prepared for the operation, the apparatus was applied to his mouth by Dr. Morton for about three minutes, at the end of which time he sank into a state of insensibility. I immediately made an incision about three inches long through the skin of the neck, and began a dissection among important nerves and blood-vessels, without any expression of pain on the part of the patient. Soon after he began to speak incoherently, and appeared to be in an agitated state during the remainder of the operation. Being asked immediately afterwards whether he had suffered much, he said that he had felt as if his neck had been scratched; but subsequently, when inquired of by me, his statement was, that he did not experience pain at the time, although aware that the operation was proceeding.

The effect of the gaseous inhalation in neutralizing the sentient faculty was made perfectly distinct to my mind by this experiment, although the patient during a part of its prosecution exhibited appearances indicative of suffering. Dr.

Morton had apprised me, that the influence of his application would last but a few minutes after its intermission; and as the operation was necessarily protracted, I was not disappointed that its success was only partial.

On the following day, October 18th, an operation was done by Dr. Hayward, on a tumour of the arm, in a female patient at the Hospital. The respiration of the gas was in this case continued during the whole of the operation. There was no exhibition of pain, excepting some occasional groans during its last stage, which she subsequently stated to have arisen from a disagreeable dream. Noticing the pulse in this patient before and after the operation, I found it to have risen from 80 to 120.

Two or three days after these occurrences, on meeting with Dr. Charles T. Jackson, distinguished for his philosophical spirit of inquiry, as well as for his geological and chemical science, this gentleman informed me that he first suggested to Dr. Morton the inspiration of ether, as a means of preventing the pain of operations on the teeth. He did not claim the invention of the apparatus, nor its practical application; for these we are indebted to Dr. Morton.

The success of this process in the prevention of pain for a certain period being quite established, I at once conceived it to be my duty to introduce the apparatus into the practice of the Hospital, but was immediately arrested by learning that the proprietor intended to obtain an exclusive patent for its use. It now became a question, whether, in accordance with that elevated principle long since introduced into the medical profession, which forbids its members to conceal any useful discovery, we could continue to encourage an application we were not allowed to use ourselves, and of the components of which we were ignorant. On discussing this matter with Dr. Hayward, my colleague in the Hospital, we came to the conclusion, that we were not justified in encouraging the further use of this new invention, until we were better satisfied on these points. Dr. Hayward thereupon had a conversation with Dr. Morton, in consequence of which Dr. M. addressed to me a letter. In this he declared his willingness to make known to us the article employed, and to supply assistance to administer the inhalation whenever called upon. These stipulations he has complied with.

This being done, we thought ourselves justified in inviting Dr. Morton to continue his experiments at the hospital, and elsewhere; and he directly after, Nov. 7th, attended at a painful and protracted operation performed by me, of the excision of a portion of the lower jaw, in which the patient's sufferings were greatly mitigated. On the same day an amputation of the thigh of a young woman was performed at the hospital by Dr. Hayward. In this case the respiration of the ethereal vapour appeared to be entirely successful in preventing the pain of the operation; the patient stating, afterwards, that she did not know that anything had been done to her.

On Nov. 12th, an operation for the removal of a tumour from the arm of a young woman was performed by Dr. J. Mason Warren. The vapour was administered for three minutes, when the patient became unconscious; the operator then proceeded, the inspiration being continued. Standing myself on one side of the patient, while the operator was on the other, so entirely tranquil was she, that I was not aware the operation had begun, until it was nearly completed.

On Nov. 21st an operation was performed by Dr. J. Mason Warren on a gentleman for the removal of a tumour, which covered nearly the half of the front of the right thigh. The patient lying upon a bed, the vapour was administered by Dr. Morton in the presence of Drs. Charles T. Jackson, Reynolds, J. V. C. Smith, Flagg, Gould, Shurtleff, Lawrence, Parsons, Briggs, and others. After he had breathed the vapour for three minutes his head fell, and he ceased to respire it, but presently awaking, the inhalation was renewed till he again appeared insensible. The operation was then commenced. At the first stroke of the knife he clapped his hand on the wound, but I immediately seized and held it during the remainder of the operation, though not without some difficulty in consequence of his struggles. The operation was completed in two or three minutes, and the patient remained quietly on his back with his eyes closed. On examination the pupils were found to be dilated; the pulse was not materially affected. After he had lain about two minutes I roused him by the inquiry, "how do you do to-day?" to which he replied, "very well, I thank you." I then asked what he had been

doing? He said he believed he had been dreaming; he dreamed that he was at home and making some examination into his business. "Do you feel any pain?" "No." "How is that tumour of yours?" The patient raised himself in bed, looked at his thigh for a moment, and said, "it is gone, and I'm glad of it." I then inquired if he had felt any pain during the operation, to which he replied in the negative. He soon recovered his natural state, experienced no inconvenience from the inhalation, was remarkably free from pain, and in three days went home into the country.

In all these cases there was a decided mitigation of pain; in most of them the patients on the day after the operation, and at other times, stated, that they had not been conscious of pain. All those who attended were, I think, satisfied of the efficacy of the application in preventing, or, at least, greatly diminishing the suffering usual in such cases. The phenomena presented in these operations afford grounds for many interesting reflections, but it being my principal intention at this time to give a simple statement of facts, I shall not pursue the subject further, but close with two or three remarks.

1st. The breathing of the ethereal vapour appears to operate directly on the cerebral system, and the consequent insensibility is proportionate to the degree of cerebral affection.

2d. Muscular power was for the time suspended in some cases, in others its loss was partial, and in one instance was scarcely sensible. The great relaxation of muscular action produced by a full dose of the application, leads to the hope that it may be employed with advantage in cases of spasmodic affection, both by the surgeon and by the physician.

3d. The action of the heart is remarkably accelerated in some cases, but not in all.

4th. The respiration is sometimes stertorous, like that of apoplexy.

All these changes soon pass off without leaving any distinct traces behind them, and the ordinary state of the functions returns. This has been the course of things in the cases I have witnessed, but I think it quite probable, that so powerful an agent may sometimes produce other and even alarming effects. I therefore would recommend, that it should never be employed except under the inspection of a judicious and competent person.

Let me conclude by congratulating my professional brethren on the acquisition of a mode of mitigating human suffering, which may become a valuable agent in the hands of careful and well-instructed practitioners, even if it should not prove of such general application as the imagination of sanguine persons would lead them to anticipate.—*Boston Med. and Surg. Jour.*

[It is asserted, on very reliable authority, that the vapour employed by Dr. Morton for inhalation, is pure sulphuric ether. The following conclusions, appended to a memoir, by M. Ducros, "On the Physiological Effects of Sulphuric Ether, administered by friction on the mouth and fauces," read to the French Academy of Sciences, are interesting in connection with this subject:—

"1st. Sulphuric ether, employed in frictions on the mouth and fauces, causes, in gallinaceous animals, instantaneous sleep, characterized by closing of the eyes and setting up (*hisement*) of the feathers.

"2d. If morphia, acetate of morphia, or extract of opium, be given during this sleep, the sleep, instead of being augmented, is instantly destroyed:—whence M. Ducros concludes that, in the gallinacæ, opiates are the antidotes to sulphuric ether.

"3d. If ether be given in poisoning by opium, the symptoms of poisoning are increased.

"4th. The soporiferous effects of ether thus administered to fowls, are also manifested in other animals and in man.

"5th. In cases of hypochondriasis attended with want of sleep, with wandering pains in the chest and abdomen, sulphuric ether employed in frictions on the tongue, velum pendulum, tonsils, and back of the pharynx, procures an agreeable sleep and calms the pains, and especially possesses these advantages in the midst of nervous excitement, when narcotics only tend to augment the general irritability.

"6th. In the convulsions of pregnant or child-bearing women, in the convulsions of the new-born, in hysterical attacks, in epileptiform paroxysms complicated with trismus (setting of the teeth,) and spasm of the œsophagus, where swallowing is impracticable, if the cavity of the mouth and pharynx be rubbed by means of a camel's-hair pencil dipped in sulphuric ether, the nervous attacks which, by long duration, might prove fatal, may generally be arrested."]

*A novel method of detecting a needle by means of Magnetism.*—By R. T. GILL, M. D., of New York. On Friday, November 13th, 1846, Miss D., while kneeling upon the carpet ran a cambric needle into her knee, and broke it. The usual ineffectual search having been made, it occurred to me, that a magnetic needle would detect it, and if the needle could be charged, its poles might be located. For this purpose, the north pole of a horse-shoe magnet was drawn several times from above downwards, over the point of entrance. Then having charged a darning needle, suspended by means of a thread, and holding it near the point where the cambric needle had entered, it was found to have slight polarity.

The horse-shoe magnet was then bound below the knee, diagonally across, so as to present the north pole towards the point of entrance, that the needle might thus be charged more effectually by induction. On the 16th, a proper magnetic needle having been procured and presented to the knee, its north pole was strongly attracted to a certain point, which was marked with ink; then on presenting the south pole, and moving it up about three-quarters of an inch, it was strongly attracted, and that point also marked. An incision at right angles, bisecting the disc between the two marks, struck the needle at its centre. Having passed a curved needle under it, so as to fix it, then cutting down upon one of its points, it was extracted.

The needle had moved more than its length below the place of entrance, caused somewhat, possibly, by the attraction of the horse-shoe magnet.—*Annalist*, Dec. 1846.

*The Dog.* By WM. YOUATT.—This is the title of a very splendid volume lately published by Messrs. Lea and Blanchard, and edited by Dr. E. J. Lewis, containing a history of the dog, "man's faithful and devoted friend," a description of its several varieties, its qualities, anatomical structure, and its diseases, and their treatment. The illustrations, which are numerous, are by Gilbert, and done in his best style. The additions by the editor relating principally to the diseases of the animal, add greatly to the value of the work.

*Professor Bartlett.*—We are happy to announce that this able and accomplished author is preparing a new edition of his work on Fevers, in which he will write out the histories of Bilious, Remittent, Congestive, and Yellow Fever, to correspond to those of Typhoid and Typhus, thus making the work more valuable to the medical men of the Middle, Southern, and Western States.

*Royle's Materia Medica and Therapeutics.*—Having been favoured with an early copy of this work, to be published in a few days by Messrs. Lea and Blanchard, we can speak of the handsome manner in which it is got up. The illustrations by Gilbert, are creditable even to that skillful artist.

*Jones on Diseases of the Eye.*—*Vogel's Pathological Anatomy.*—These two valuable works will be issued in a few days by Messrs. Lea and Blanchard. We shall notice them particularly in our next.

*Summary of the Transactions of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia.*—The proceedings of the college from Nov. 1841, to Aug. 1846, inclusive, forming a good sized volume, has just been published and is for sale at J. G. Auner's bookstore, No. 333 Market Street. It comprises much valuable practical matter.

*The Annalist; a record of Practical Medicine and Surgery in the city of New York.*—This is the title of a periodical, edited with great spirit and ability by Dr. WM. C. ROBERTS, and published bi-monthly. We shall enrich our own pages by extracts from it.